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FM AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SARAJEVO 003185

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DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/Q AND INL/AAE

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TAGS: PGOV PREL PINR KJUS KCRM PTER BK

SUBJECT: BOSNIA - FEDERATION POLICE CHIEF FACES OUSTER

Classified By: Ambassador Douglas McElhaney. Reasons: 1.4 (b), (d).

Summary

¶1. (C) Longstanding political and personal feuds between Zlatko Miletic, Director of the Federation Police, and members of the Federation government have resulted in procedural attempts to remove Miletic from his position. Miletic has been an effective mission counterpart on security issues and his departure would be detrimental to our law enforcement cooperation. Post has raised the issue of Miletic's appointment with key SDA and HDZ officials, including Sulejman Tihic and Niko Lozancic. However, in light of the depth of SDA and HDZ political grievances against him, the prospects for Miletic's survival in the position do not look good. We will continue to press for a temporary extension of the Miletic mandate in the hopes that a new Federation government will be more favorably disposed towards his permanent reappointment. We have also urged PIC Steering Board Ambassadors to do the same. End Summary

¶2. (C) The four-year appointment of Federation Police Director Zlatko Miletic expired on November 28. In what should have been a routine reappointment of Miletic as the sole qualified candidate for the Federation Police Directorate, key Party for Democratic Action (SDA) and Croation-Democratic Union of BiH (HDZ) Federation ministers voted instead to terminate his mandate. In doing so, the Federation ministers, led by Interior Mevludin Halilovic, ignored the recommendation of the Independent Supervisory Review Board (ISRB) charged with reviewing candidates for law enforcement positions that Miletic be reappointed. Halilovic and other Federation ministers have charged that the mandate of ISRB has expired and that a new appointment must wait until the formation of a new Federation Parliament.

¶3. (C) Although the mandate of the ISRB is a matter of legal debate, it was charged by the Federation Parliament Security Committee confirming its mandate through the end of the year. Nonetheless, it is clear that Miletic's ouster is the result of political opposition within SDA and HDZ. Miletic has been involved in a long-standing feud with Minister Halilovic and SDA vice-president Bakir Izetbegovic over his prosecution of SDA members on corruption charges. Similarly, HDZ views Miletic as partly responsible for the arrest and conviction of Dragan Covic for abuse of office.

¶4. (C) Miletic departed office with the expiration of his appointment and the Federation police is currently led by his Deputy Samir Dzebo. On December 4 the Federation ministers considered a contingency proposal, raised by Federation PM

Ahmed Hadzipasic, to extend Miletic's mandate for sixty days until the new Parliament is formed. Halilovic and other SDA and HDZ ministers rejected the proposal. Halilovic has asked that the Federation cabinet instead consider two other candidates, both with problematic histories. The first, Brkic Drago, Chief of Uniformed Police of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton is currently being investigated by Federation police as a result of his sisters' role in a police-auto buying scam. The second, Covic Zeljko of the State Border Service has often publicly complained that the Federation police only investigates Croats.

¶15. (C) In the past week the Embassy has met with key officials in the Federation government to press for an extension or reappointment of Miletic. On December 12, the Ambassador raised the issue with President Tihic stating that the USG hoped to see Miletic remain in office. Tihic was noncommittal but promised to look into the issue and also raised allegations circulating among his SDA of Miletic's corruption. During a December 12 meeting, poloff urged Federation President and acting HDZ-BiH President Niko Lozanic, to reconsider his opposition to reappointing Miletic. In response, Lozanic said he was firmly opposed to extending Miletic in his position. Lozanic accused Miletic of "political activism" and stated Miletic's behavior was "not in keeping with his role as police director."

¶16. (C) During a December 13 meeting, Federation Interior Minister Melvudin Halilovic was even more pointed in his criticism of Miletic cataloging sensational accusations of corruption and abuse of office. In response to poloff's request that he support reappointing Miletic in the interests of rule of law continuity, Halilovic stated he could never approve keeping Miletic in office. On December 15, Federation Prime Minister Ahmed Hadzipasic told poloff that

SARAJEVO 00003185 002 OF 002

he agreed that the indefinite vacuum created by Miletic's departure would present problems for the Federation and he was personally inclined to support a temporary extension, but he was reluctant to instruct Halilovic to reverse course. Nonetheless, Hadzipasic undertook to again discuss the issue with his Interior Minister to reach a "practical solution." Among key Federation government officials, only Deputy Premier Gavrilo Grahovac was concerned over the prospect of Miletic's departure.

¶17. (C) The Ambassador briefed the PIC Steering Board Ambassadors (SBA) on December 15 about U.S. efforts urging the Federation government to retain Miletic. While there was broad consensus at the SBA that it would be unfortunate if Miletic were removed from office, no one indicated a willingness to actively intercede on his behalf. The Head of the EU Police Mission, General Coppola, has told us that he would like to see Miletic retained and would lobby the Federation government on his behalf, but others at OHR have taken a more sanguine view of Miletic's fate. At the staff level, the focus is on completing the Police Reform Directorate's work, and provided this can be done without Miletic, as seems likely, OHR is not inclined to press for Miletic's retention.

Comment

¶18. (C) SDA and HDZ grievances have largely resulted from Miletic's prosecution of corruption within the parties. These conflicts came to a head with the opportunity to remove Miletic raised by the lack of a Federation Parliament. Miletic has been an apolitical and effective mission counterpart on law enforcement and security issues and his departure would be a blow to prospects for continued effective cooperation in these areas. Given depth of rancor towards Miletic within the SDA and HDZ prospects for his reappointment do not look good. We will continue to press for a temporary extension of the Miletic mandate in the hopes

that a new Federation government will be more favorably disposed towards his permanent reappointment. End Comment.
MCELHANEY